

# Rural areas offer workers more than a pay cheque

Employers in small towns and rural areas advised to emphasize workplace culture and quality of life when recruiting employees

BY JOHN MINER  
Ontario Farmer

Stratford - The company hockey team was one of the ways Don Gosen attracted and retained good workers for his Waterloo-based electrical contracting firm.

"It was a way of bringing in young people. Sometimes we would bring them onto the team and hire them into the company," said Gosen, who operated Gosen Electric for 38 years.

Gosen told a session at the Canadian Farm Builders Association (CFBA) annual conference that employers in rural areas and small towns may not be able to compete with the pay scale offered in urban centres.

build long term relationships in their community with organizations such as the local high school, participating in information evenings and job fairs.

Gosen also suggested companies consider hiring apprentices.

"It is a way of preparing your company for the future and its a way of building your workforce from within," he said.

Skilled workers may also be available when other companies cutback or shutdown. Gosen pointed to the case of the closure in February of the Erwin Hymer Group plant in Cambridge, the maker of quality Roadtrek motorhomes.

Many of the workers at the



Don Gosen, former chair of the Ontario College of Trades,

plant were employed in carpentry or working with electrical systems.

"Think outside the box," said Gosen. "When there is a door that closes like Erwin Hymer it

sometimes creates opportunity for companies like ours that are looking for good people."

CFBA president Terry Rothwell said the association's board has been looking at changes in trade designations as a way to ensure the industry has new employees who would be better versed in the farm building construction process.

Instead of linking a trade designation to one element in a building, such as carpentry or plumbing, a new Certified Professional Farm Builder designation would be based on the whole building process.

"A certified professional farm builder CPFBD trade designation would give tomor-

row's farm builders a solid understanding of our industry," he said.

Colleges such as Conestoga that already offer excellent construction technology courses might be able to incorporate a curriculum tailored to farm builders, he said.

Rothwell said establishing the new trade designation would require coordination between government, vocational institutes, the industry and the CFBA. Right now it is only a discussion point, he emphasized, asking association members to provide their input.

"Our world is changing and we have to adapt," he said.

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But young people are often looking at more than just the pay cheque when they are job-hunting, said Gosen, who is an instructor at Conestoga College and former chair of the Ontario College of Trades.

Young people want to work with someone they can look up to, and they care about things like the work-life balance, said Gosen.

"You've got your reputation, your workplace culture, the quality of life that exists in a rural community, your ability to mentor those new recruits, working with them, helping them learn every day that they are there," Gosen said.

"You have to keep these things in mind when you are recruiting young talent."

Gosen recommended employers outside of major urban downtowns emphasize opportunities in their communities that may not be available in downtown centres, such as the local curling or Lions clubs.

And he advised employers to




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 <p><b>CH '12 JD 6170R</b> 55986, 1754hrs, MFWD, AQ, Prem Lights, Dix Cab, AutoTrac, 4 SCV, 8 Wgts, Radar, 3pt Hitch, Dix Radio, Rear PTO</p> <p><b>\$112,500</b></p>	 <p><b>CH '16 JD 7210R</b> 54018, 612hrs, MFWD, 20/20 CQ, LHR, 4 SCV, Michelins, Prem Lights, XM Radio, Ethernet Switch, Cat 3 Hitch</p> <p><b>\$208,000</b></p>	 <p><b>CH '14 JD 7210R</b> 55988, 1477hrs, MFWD, CQ, TLS+, 4 SCV, LHR, 8 Wgts, Radar, 1000 PTO, Michelins, Front Fenders, FT4 Eng</p> <p><b>\$169,500</b></p>	 <p><b>CH '16 JD 8245R</b> 55903, 952hrs, MFWD, PS, AutoTrac Ready, Cat 3 Hitch, RHR, 4 SCV, 8 Wgts, Radar, Ethernet Switch, Michelins</p> <p><b>\$229,500</b></p>	 <p><b>CH '17 JD 8245R</b> 55437, 310hrs, MFWD, e23, 6 SCV w/Dual Hyd Pumps, ILS w/Hyd Diff Lock, LHR, Prem Lights, Radio, Cab</p> <p><b>\$274,500</b></p>
 <p><b>CO '16 JD 8270R</b> 53105, 863 hrs, MFWD, PS, Active Seat, XM Radio, 1 3/4 1000 PTO, 4 SCV, RHR Bump Shift, 16 Wgts, Front &amp; Rear Duals</p> <p><b>\$259,500</b></p>	 <p><b>CH '15 JD 8270R</b> 54742, 1316hrs, MFWD, PS, 4 SCV, 4600 Processor, Cat 3 Hitch, Front Fenders, 8 Wgts, RHR, Ethernet Switch</p> <p><b>\$214,500</b></p>	 <p><b>CH '16 JD 8320R</b> 53450, 346hrs, MFWD, PS, Leather Trim, 5 SCV, AutoTrac - 4100 Processor, Radar, 16 Wgts, 1000 PTO, Prem Cab</p> <p><b>\$334,500</b></p>	 <p><b>CO '16 JD 8320R</b> 52794, 387hrs, MFWD, PS, ILS, Active Seat, XM Radio, Prem Lights, 5 SCV, 480/80R50 Rears - Michelins</p> <p><b>\$324,500</b></p>	 <p><b>CH '15 JD 8370R</b> 51556, 1179hrs, MFWD w/Suspension, IVT, AutoTrac Ready, 370hp</p> <p><b>\$369,500</b></p>

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